GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Master of Criminal Justice Programs

Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies
School of Applied Sciences
University of Mississippi

Graduate Program Director: Dr. Kimberly Kaiser, Assistant Professor

Department Chair: Dr. Wesley Jennings, Professor

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1. MISSION, VISION, AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

VISION STATEMENT

The Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies aspires to be at the forefront of applied research and education to provide an unmatched educational experience for our graduate students.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies is to promote evidence-based policy and practice and to prepare future leaders in the fields of criminal justice, homeland security, and emergency management.

We work to accomplish this mission through the following educational objectives:

Objective 1: Graduates will be able to demonstrate comprehension of research and empirical evidence related to the fields of criminal justice policy, homeland security, emergency management, or criminal justice leadership.

Objectives 2: Graduates will be able to demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge gained in the program to new problems and areas relevant to the fields of criminal justice policy, homeland security, emergency management, or criminal justice leadership.

Objective 3: Graduates will be able to use their skills and knowledge to develop and/or advance their profession in the fields of criminal justice policy, homeland security, emergency management, or criminal justice leadership or be successful in achieving advanced degrees.

Objectives: Graduates will become forerunners in positions to promote and advocate for effective, evidence-based policies and practices. They will become recognized experts addressing some of the challenging criminal justice policy, homeland security, emergency management, or criminal justice leadership issues of our times.

Objective 5: Graduates will become leaders in their chosen profession and in related activities.

2. WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome interested and admitted students to the Master of Criminal Justice (MCJ) program in the Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies at the University of Mississippi! As you know and will soon experience, our graduate degree program options (i.e., in-person, fully online, 4+1 accelerated program) and multiple options for emphasis areas including Criminal Justice Policy & Practice, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and Criminal Justice Leadership represent one of the most flexible, accessible, and customizable MCJ programs in the country. All of our programs have been informed by extensive background and market-based research and are designed for the purpose of providing an unmatched educational experience that will directly translate to jobs, career advancement, further career specialization, and/or to best position students for competitive placement and success in advanced graduate degree programs including doctoral programs. We look forward to working with you all!

Warm Regards,

Dr. Wesley Jennings, Chair & Professor

3. HANDBOOK INTRODUCTION

This handbook summarizes general requirements for the Master of Criminal Justice program to serve as a guide for students. This handbook is intended to familiarize graduate students with the applicable policies, procedures, and requirements relating to the Master of Criminal Justice program and required by the Graduate School regulations.

The primary responsibility for adherence to policies, regulations, deadlines, and degree requirements rests with the student. Questions should be directed to the Graduate Program Director. Information in this handbook is intended to supplement the Graduate School policies and information, which can be obtained from the Graduate School Website at https://gradschool.olemiss.edu/

4. GRADUATE FACULTY

Dr. Wesley Jennings (Department Chair)	wgj@olemiss.edu
Dr. Kimberly Kaiser (Graduate Program Coordinator)	
Dr. Francis Boateng	fboateng@olemiss.edu
Dr. Brian Boutwell	bbboutwe@olemiss.edu
Dr. Rachel Greenspan	rlgreen@olemiss.edu
Dr. Linda Keena	ldkeena@olemiss.edu
Dr. David McElreath	dhmcel@olemiss.edu
Dr. Abigail Novak	anovak@olemiss.edu
Dr. D'Andre Walker	

5. ADMISSION CRITERIA

The following admission requirements apply to all Master of Criminal Justice program options.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Priority Deadline: Students seeking to be considered for funding opportunities, such as Graduate Assistantships must apply by April 1st (these funding opportunities are only available to students applying for the Criminal Justice Policy & Practice, in-person, emphasis) for fall admission and by October 1st for Spring admission.

Standard Deadline: For all other applicants, the department accepts rolling admissions as long as the application is completed and submitted within one month prior to the start of the semester the student intends to enroll.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- 1) All students must complete and submit the Graduate School's on-line admission application found at https://apply.olemiss.edu/graduate/
- 2) Evidence of an awarded Baccalaureate Degree from an accredited college or university.
- 3) Quality of the applicant's academic record, as evidenced by cumulative grade point average. At least a 3.0 or equivalent grade point average on the last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework is required.
- 4) **Three (3) letters of professional recommendation**, preferably from professors familiar with your academic qualifications or others familiar with your work ethic and ability to be successful in graduate school.
- 5) **Statement of Interest.** A 400- to 500-word statement of interest that describes your interest in pursuing the Master of Criminal Justice degree, your chosen emphasis in 1) Criminal Justice Policy & Practice (in-person), 2) Homeland Security & Emergency Management (online), or 3) Criminal Justice Leadership (online), your future career goals, and why you believe you will be successful in graduate school.
- 6) **Writing Sample.** Submit a sample of your recent written work that best showcases your skills as a writer and critical thinker. Writing samples should be in English and no more than 10 double-spaced pages in length. There are no specific formatting requirements. This could be a term paper, professional report, policy brief, or any other document that demonstrates writing and analytic skills.
- 7) International students must demonstrate compliance with the University of Mississippi's English Language Proficiency Score Requirements and Exemptions policy

Please note that the Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies does <u>NOT</u> require the submission of GRE scores for the Master of Criminal Justice program.

APPLICATION FOR FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Prospective students that are interested in a **Graduate Assistantship** position (only applicable for the Criminal Justice Policy & Practice in-person emphasis) should also submit:

- 1) Resume or curriculum vitae.
- 2) Brief statement of interest of no more than 300 words in the assistantship position, including interest in research and/or teaching and skills that you will bring to the position.

Students seeking to be considered for the <u>funding opportunities available through the Graduate School</u> should contact the Graduate Program Coordinator for the program prior to submitting their application.

MASTER OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACCELERATED DEGREE PROGRAM (MCJ 4+1)

The Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies offers an accelerated bachelor's/master's program for students currently admitted to the Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice (BSCJ). This allows student to graduate with a B.S. in criminal justice and a Master of Criminal Justice (MCJ) within five years.

As part of this program, students will take up to 12 credits (i.e., four courses) in the Master of Criminal Justice (MCJ) program during their final year of their bachelor program. These credits will be dual counted towards the completion of their undergraduate degree and master's degree.

Students interested in pursuing the 4+1 accelerated degree program, must have completed 90 credit hours of undergraduate coursework and have a minimum GPA of 3.0 or above to be eligible. Students would apply for admission to the MCJ program during their junior year of undergraduate or when they have completed 90 credit hours of undergraduate coursework. Students must meet the qualifications for admission into the MCJ program.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must have completed 90 credit hours of undergraduate coursework completed
- Must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above
- Completion of Criminal Justice Communications (CJ 322) or Advanced Composition (Writ 250) (or equivalent writing course) with a minimum grade of B.

Application Procedure

- Interested students should first meet with the Graduate Program Coordinator, Dr. Kimberly Kaiser, and the undergraduate advisor, Ms. Crystal Dunn, to learn more about the program and how to apply. Typically, students will apply for the 4+1 during their final semester of their junior year.
- Undergraduate students participating in the 4+1 program will follow the typical application process for the MCJ program during the Fall or Spring of their senior year.

6. PROGRAM CURRICULUM & REQUIREMENTS

The Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies offers three (3) program options for the Master of Criminal Justice: Criminal Justice Policy & Practice (in-person), Homeland Security & Emergency Management (Online), and Criminal Justice Leadership (Online).

OPTION 1: CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY & PRACTICE (IN-PERSON)

Students must complete a total of 30 credit hours of graduate work, including 24 hours of course work and 6 hours in either thesis, capstone, or practicum option. Additional requirements:

- 1) Complete all four (4) core classes with a grade of B- or above
- 2) Complete three (3) elective courses in the Criminal Justice Policy & Practice emphasis
- 3) Complete one (1) additional research- or statistics-based elective
- 4) Six (6) credit hours to fulfill degree culmination requirements: either thesis, capstone, or practicum option (capstone option requires completion of one additional elective course)
- 5) Students may take up to two (2) online 8-week courses (with Graduate Program Coordinator approval)

Core Classes:

All students are required to take the following 16-week courses. Students cannot take the online, 8 week versions of these courses.

- 1) CJ 600: Criminal Justice Administration
- 2) CJ 601: Criminal Justice Statistics
- 3) CJ 602: Criminal Justice Research Methods
- 4) CJ 624: Theories of Criminal Behavior

Criminal Justice Policy & Practice Emphasis Classes:

Students choose three (3) of the following courses for the Criminal Justice Policy & Practice emphasis. Each course is 3 credit hours.

- 1) CJ 620: Criminal Justice in American Society: Policy & Practice
- 2) CJ 621: Seminar in Law Enforcement
- 3) CJ 622: Seminar in Courts and Sentencing
- 4) CJ 623: Seminar in Corrections
- 5) CJ 642: Cyber Crime & Cybersecurity
- 6) CJ 641: Transnational Crime
- 7) CJ 643: Legal Issues in Criminal Justice*
- 8) CJ 646: Special Topics in Criminal Justice*
- 9) CJ 649: Independent Study*
- 10) CJ 661: Criminal Justice Policy & Program Evaluation
- 11) CJ 664: GIS and Crime Mapping Analysis

Research and/or Statistics Electives:

Students must complete one (1) research or statistics elective course. The following list of courses meet this requirement.** Each course is 3 credit hours. Students may take a research or statistics course outside of these options (including courses outside the department) with Graduate Program Coordinator approval.

- 1) CJ 661: Criminal Justice Policy & Program Evaluation
- 2) CJ 662: Emergency Management and Homeland Security Policy Evaluation
- 3) CJ 663: Special topics in Criminal Justice Statistics & Research*
- 4) CJ 664: GIS and Crime Mapping Analysis

Degree Culmination Options:

Student must complete one of the following options to complete their degree. All students must obtain approval from the Graduate Program Coordinator prior to enrolling in degree culmination credits.

- 1) CJ 693: Capstone Course; 3 credits. Students review, research, and evaluate a criminal justice policy or issue resulting in a systematic review paper. Students must complete this course with a grade of B- or above. Students must take one (1) additional elective if choosing this option.
 - a. Students must identify topic for their capstone project and receive approval from the instructor during the semester before the student intends to take the capstone course.
 - b. Students must have completed 18 hours of coursework, including completion of all four (4) core courses before they will be approved to take the capstone course.
- 2) CJ 690: Practicum; 6 credits. In partnership with agency, student must fulfill a tangible and specific project. Examples may include, policy analysis/evaluation, creating a database for the agency, building a website, written report, etc. Students must submit proposal for project, approved by graduate committee. Project must demonstrate application of graduate-level skills and knowledge. After project is completed, student will present report to graduate committee.
- 3) CJ 697: Thesis Traditional thesis option; 6 credits

^{*} May be taken 2 times with a different topic.

^{**}Some courses may be taken for either the CJP&P or to fulfill the research/statistics elective.

OPTION 2: HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (ONLINE)

Students must complete a total of 30 credit hours of graduate coursework. Classes are offered in accelerated online 8-week sessions.

- 1) Complete all four (4) core courses with a grade of B- or above.
- 2) Complete five (5) elective courses, 3 courses of which need to be in the Homeland Security & Emergency Management emphasis.
- 3) Complete CJ 693: Criminal Justice Capstone with a grade of B- or above.

Core Classes:

All students are required to take the following courses (offered in accelerated online 8-week sessions):

- 1) CJ 600: Criminal Justice Administration
- 2) CJ 601: Criminal Justice Statistics
- 3) CJ 602: Criminal Justice Research Methods
- 4) CJ 624: Theories of Criminal Behavior

Homeland Security & Emergency Management Emphasis Classes:

Students choose a minimum of three (3) of the following courses for the Homeland Security and Emergency Management emphasis. Each course is 3 credit hours.

- 1) CJ 630: Seminar in Homeland Security Operations
- 2) CJ 631: Seminar in Emergency Management
- 3) CJ 632: Seminar in Extremism and Terrorism
- 4) CJ 634: Emergency Response Management Policy & Planning
- 5) CJ 636: Critical Infrastructure Security
- 6) CJ 642: Cyber Crime & Cybersecurity
- 7) CJ 641: Transnational Crime
- 8) CJ 651: Special Topics in Emergency Management & Homeland Security*
- 9) CJ 649: Independent Study*

Degree Culmination: Criminal Justice Capstone

All students must complete the CJ 693: Capstone Course. This class is 3 credit hours. Students review, research, and evaluate a criminal justice, emergency management, or homeland security policy or issue resulting in a systematic review paper. Students must complete this course with a grade of B- or above.

- a. All students must receive approval from the Graduate Program Coordinator.
- b. Students must identify topic for their capstone project and receive approval from the instructor during the semester before the student intends to take the capstone course.
- c. Students must have completed 18 hours of coursework, including completion of all four (4) core courses before they will be approved to take the capstone course.

^{*} May be taken 2 times with a different topic.

OPTION 3: CRIMINAL JUSTICE LEADERSHIP (ONLINE)

Students must complete a total of 30 credit hours of graduate work. Classes are offered in accelerated online 8-week sessions.

- 1) Complete all four (4) core courses with a grade of B- or above
- 2) Complete five (5) elective courses, 3 courses of which need to be in the Criminal Justice Leadership emphasis.
- 3) Complete CJ 693: Criminal Justice Capstone with a grade of B- or above.

Core Classes:

All students are required to take the following courses (offered in accelerated online 8-week sessions):

- 1) CJ 600: Criminal Justice Administration
- 2) CJ 601: Criminal Justice Statistics
- 3) CJ 602: Criminal Justice Research Methods
- 4) CJ 624: Theories of Criminal Behavior

Criminal Justice Leadership Classes:

Students choose a minimum of three (3) of the following courses for the Criminal Justice Leadership emphasis. Each course is 3 credit hours.

- 1) CJ 671: Communications for Criminal Justice Leaders
- 2) CJ 672: Conflict Resolution and Decision-Making
- 3) CJ 673: Criminal Justice Evidence-Based Decision-Making
- 4) CJ 674: Budgeting & Finance
- 5) CJ 676: Principles of Leadership
- 6) CJ 678: Diversity and Inclusivity
- 7) CJ 679: Special Topics in Criminal Justice Leadership*
- 8) CJ 680: Personnel Management
- 9) CJ 649: Independent Study*

Degree Culmination: Criminal Justice Capstone

All students must complete the CJ 693: Capstone Course. This class is 3 credit hours. Students review, research, and evaluate a criminal justice, emergency management, or homeland security policy or issue resulting in a systematic review paper. Students must complete this course with a grade of B- or above.

- a. All students must receive approval from the Graduate Program Coordinator.
- b. Students must identify topic for their capstone project and receive approval from the instructor during the semester before the student intends to take the capstone course.
- c. Students must have completed 18 hours of coursework, including completion of all four (4) core courses before they will be approved to take the capstone course.

^{*} May be taken 2 times with a different topic.

7. DEGREE COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

A student who expects to complete all degree requirements by the end of a particular semester must submit a degree application form to the Graduate Program Coordinator which will then be forwarded to the Graduate School. The deadline for submitting this application form is approximately one month after the beginning of Fall or Spring semester. The actual deadlines are posted on the Graduate School website at https://gradschool.olemiss.edu/current-students/the-end-game-preparing-to-graduate/. If a student is not able to complete the degree requirements at the end of the semester they applied to graduate, the student must resubmit their application in a future semester.

Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 3 credit hours during the semester they intend to graduate for Fall or Spring semesters and a minimum of one credit hour for students planning to graduate during the summer.

8. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

GRADUATE CATALOG

Graduate Students in the Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies are advised to become familiar with the policies published by the Graduate School each year. These can be found in the Graduate Catalog, which can be found at http://catalog.olemiss.edu/graduate-school.

Transfer of Graduate Credits from Another Institution

The maximum number of credits that may be transferred in from other accredited colleges and universities is six (6) credit hours for up to two (2) courses for the Master of Criminal Justice degree. Transfer courses must be taken at the graduate level with a passing grade of B or higher; the student must have had graduate status at the time the courses were taken. Recommendations from the Department Graduate Program Coordinator and the Department Chair must be obtained, and the transfer of graduate credit hours must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. Neither the Department Graduate Program Coordinator nor the Department Chair are required to recommend acceptance of graduate transfer credit. **Students may not transfer credits from another college or university for the four (4) required core courses**.

Grades from other academic institutions may not substitute for unsatisfactory grades earned at the University of Mississippi, nor may the grade of A or B earned at another academic institution be used to offset a lower grade earned at the University of Mississippi.

IN-PERSON: MINIMUM/MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT AND DEFINITION OF FULL-TIME

A minimum enrollment of 3 hours is required of every graduate student in each regular semester and 1 hour during the summer session, including registration for thesis or dissertation. The maximum enrollment for a graduate student during a regular session is 15 semester hours, including thesis and dissertation. In the summer session, the student may register for no more than 6 semester hours each term.

A graduate student registered for 9 or more graduate-level credit hours during the Fall or Spring semesters at the university is considered to be a full-time student. In a summer term, a graduate student registered for 4 or more semester hours is considered a full-time student though, to satisfy residence requirements, the student must enroll for a total of 9 hours during the summer session terms.

Students holding a ½ time (20 hours/week) Graduate Assistantship appointment must be enrolled in a minimum of 9 credit hours and a maximum of 12 credit hours per semester (only 9 of which can be coursework, the balance being enrolling in thesis credits). Students holding a ¼ time (10 hours/week) Graduate Assistantship appointment must be enrolled in a minimum of 6 credit hours and a maximum of 12 credit hours per semester. In order to be eligible to receive a partial tuition scholarship, all graduate assistants must enroll for at least 9 hours of graduate credit.

ONLINE: MINIMUM/MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT AND DEFINITION OF FULL-TIME

The University of Mississippi calculates enrollment based on total hours for the regular, full semester, defined as 1st and 2nd fall sessions combined or 1st and 2nd spring sessions combined. A minimum enrollment of 3 hours per regular semester is required of every graduate student, meaning that students must enroll in at least one class in either 1st or 2nd session to be considered continuously enrolled. Students that do not enroll in at least one class for one regular, full semester will need to complete the GS-10 Readmission Application to a Graduate Degree Program to reactivate their status to enroll in future classes. Students that do not enroll in at least one class for more than two regular, full semesters (four or more sessions), must reapply to the program.

Full-time enrollment for the online program is considered 6 credits (2 classes) per session for a total of 12 credits per regular, full semester. Taking more than 6 credits per session will be considered as an overload by the department. Students wishing to enroll in more than 6 credits per session must seek approval from the Graduate Program Coordinator. The maximum enrollment for a graduate student during a regular, full semester is 15 semester hours, including both 1st and 2nd sessions combined. Maximum enrollment for the summer session is 6 credits.

GRADES

Graduate students may receive quality grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, or F on graduate coursework, but grades of C-, D, and F are not acceptable for graduate credit.

Grades of C+, C, C-, D, and F in the core classes (CJ 600, CJ 601, CJ 602, CJ 624) are not acceptable for graduate credit in the MCJ program.

In calculating grade-point average, the quality points associated with the above scale are as follows: A = 4.0, A = 3.7, B + = 3.3, B = 3.0, B = 2.7, C + = 2.3, C = 2.0, C = 1.7, D = 1.0 and F = 0. In certain specifically designated courses, the mark of Z is given to indicate that a student has received graduate credit but has been assigned no quality grade in the course; however, in courses approved for the Z mark, instructors may assign the quality grade of F. The only other marks that may be assigned in courses approved for the Z mark are I or W.

Graduate students must maintain at least a B = 3.0 average on all graduate coursework undertaken. Where a student is required to take, as part of the degree program, more than 12 hours in an area outside the field of specialization, a B = 3.0 average must be presented in both areas, computed separately. Unless specifically approved to be otherwise, no grades or marks are given for courses designated as thesis, doctoral essay, or dissertation. In any situation in which a graduate student wishes to appeal a grade, he or she should contact the Dean of the Graduate School for a copy of the Graduate School Appeal Procedure, which shall apply in this case.

GOOD STANDING AND ACADEMIC PROBATION

To be in good standing, graduate students are expected to maintain a B average. Students must have a 3.0 GPA on coursework that is presented to satisfy requirements for a degree. Students whose grade-point average falls below 3.0 in any regular semester will be placed on probation and expected to improve their grades to an acceptable level before the end of their next period of enrollment. If the grade-point average of a graduate student for a semester or term has been unsatisfactory, the Dean of the Graduate School may refuse permission for the student to register for further work or change the student's classification.

GRADUATE ORGANIZATIONS

There is a University of Mississippi Graduate Student Council, and the website for this organization can be found online at http://gsc.olemiss.edu/.

Graduate students enrolled in a graduate program in criminal justice or related field who have completed at least four graduate courses and have a minimum GPA of 3.4 on a 4.0 scale may apply to be a member of The University of Mississippi's chapter of Alpha Phi Sigma, Mu Rho. Alpha Phi Sigma is the National Criminal Justice Honor Society. To start the application process, interested students should contact the Alpha Phi Sigma advisor, Dr. Linda Keena at ldkeena@olemiss.edu.

9. GRADUATE STUDENT SUPPORT

The Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies and the Graduate School offer several options to help support our graduate students. Financial assistance is dependent

on availability of funds and student's satisfactory progress toward fulfillment of departmental requirements for degree sought.

FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The Graduate School offers recruiting fellowships and scholarships, including for academic and inclusivity excellence) and summer graduate research assistantships. You can find more information on these programs at https://gradschool.olemiss.edu/prospective-students/financial-aid-information/

Online programs are NOT eligible for University fellowships, scholarship or assistantships at this time.

TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

The Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies has limited funds available to support graduate students listed as first author on a research presentation and/or recognized through an award for original research/scholarship.

Students must first apply to the <u>Graduate School Travel Award</u> program before being eligible to receive departmental funds. The Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies will match the Graduate School funds up to \$300. Students are only eligible to receive one Graduate School Travel Award.

ASSISTANTSHIP POSITIONS

The Department of Criminal Justice & Legal Studies offers a limited number of Graduate Assistantship positions. Students are awarded assistantships on a competitive basis and the continuation of an assistantship are based on an annual review of student performance. Students awarded teaching and research assistantships are required to be present during normal working hours at a minimum (weekdays from 8:00am to 5:00 pm) for at least half of their appointed hours each week.

Students awarded research or teaching assistantships are considered full-time students and may not hold a job outside of the department. Students taking employment outside of the department that interferes with their ability to perform in their capacity as a student or graduate assistantship will forfeit their assistantship appointment.

To receive a graduate assistantship, student must be enrolled as a full-time student and must maintain a minimum 3.0 grade-point average. Graduate assistants will receive a partial or full tuition scholarship for the fall and spring semester and an additional stipend, depending on whether they hold a quarter- or half-time appointment.

Conditions for Termination:

The appointment of a graduate assistant may be terminated by the University, upon the recommendation of the departmental head, for the following reasons:

- incompetent job performance or neglect of duty;
- misconduct that is job-related;
- moral turpitude;
- physical or mental ailment or condition which significantly impairs or limits job performance and cannot reasonably be accommodated;
- financial exigency or discontinuance of the work for which the appointment is made;
- mutual agreement;
- failure to maintain a graduate grade point average of 3.0 and/or failure to maintain the minimum enrollment obligation.